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Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

Workers of the World, Unite!

L. Kameneff.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

**A Report on Soviet Construction read at the
VII-th All-Russian Congress of Soviets.**

Published by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade
Unions.

Moscow.—1920.

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CENTRAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Our Experience.

Comrades!

The VIIIth All Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' Peasants', Red Army and Cossack Deputies is faced with the work of summing up the total of practical Soviet Construction of which every member of the Congress had his share of experience. Thousands of comrades who have come to this Congress bring with them extensive experience of practical construction of the proletarian State. No one had had this kind of experience before us. Nor could it have been foreseen or analysed in books or by theories. It fell to our lot for the first time in the history of the world to establish the first rules which we have learned by experience in a bitter struggle; in our resolutions and in our constitution we record the victories which the Workers and Peasants have gained in the construction of the Workers Peasants' State, victories which were gained at the cost of a hard struggle, involving errors and at times even defeat.

More than a local or narrow Russian significance is to be attached to this experience. It is of international importance. The fact that the first record of our experience the in construction of the proletarian State—our constitution—has become the revolutionary handbook for the proletarian masses of Western Europe and of America bears witness to this. There is another thing that gives evidence to the same effect. When it became known in Germany that the Party of the independent Social Democrats had left the 2nd International and had recognised the principles of Soviet Construction, the traitors of the working class—the leaders of the Sheidemann party, replied to this declaration of the workers of Germany by putting to them a jesuitical question. They said: the independents should illustrate in detail what the soviet system is, and what it actually resembles in practice. This is a jesuitic question because it is impossible to tell beforehand, or put down in writing or to enumerate in a paragraph what

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the construction of the Soviet system is like. Only through the struggle itself are the Soviet institutions being created which embody the spirit and the essence of the proletarian state.

By analysing and formulating in the decisions of the congress the two years' experience in state construction we not only further our own cause, we assist the German workers as well as the workers of all other countries, who are freeing themselves from the influence of the second International, to give the following answer to the jesuitic question of the followers of Sheidemann: the nature of Soviet construction appears exactly as was described by the Russian workers and peasants, on the basis of the two years experiences, who have assembled to the number of 1000 delegates and by mutual efforts correcting and completing each other have recorded in the decision of their congress (applause).

Naturally enough this question has raised in the press as well as at the private meetings of delegates and in the sections of the congress long and at times passionate disputes. We have however after all found a common language and we hope that the resolution which I propose to you on behalf of the commission of the section on Soviet construction will really be a statement of that which unites us all and which enables us to solve the questions which have matured for such solution in the localities.

The Role of the Local Soviets.

At this congress we are faced with two basic problems in the sphere of construction. The first consists in the completion of the construction of Soviet institutions from the bottom to the top. We must state on the basis of our experience the correlation between the local Soviets and the supreme organ which crowns all the local Soviets. What does a Soviet of Deputies mean to us? The Soviet of workers, peasants, red army soliders' and cossack deputies is the organ of the labour government, an assembly of toilers through which ever fresh working masses are passing. The working people learning by actual experience the business of administration are thus destroying the particular independant caste whose only business in life is to govern. In so far as ever fresh masses are passing through these organs of Soviet construction—the ground is prepared for the eradication of any caste or section of professional administrators and officials. We are, therefore, faced with the task of attracting to the Soviets, to these

organs of labour administration in the Soviet Government ever greater masses of the people. Our constitution says, and we must again confirm it, that should we even be forced by the heavy struggle in which we have been involved against our will to experience a temporary weakening and decline of the work of these organs of labour representation and labour government—this manifestation is not normal, being the result of temporary circumstances. Our task is in spite of all difficulties which have been created by the war, by the backwardness of the population and the economic disorganisation to make the Soviets of workers, peasants, cossacks deputies to attract ever greater masses of the working population of the country, to get these Soviets actually to take the administration of the country into their own hands, to take over the control of the entire state administration and the entire industry and thus to create in the Soviets a constantly alternating cadre of workers and peasants, who will cope with the tremendous difficulties, which will be met with by those who for the first time in history realise the government by the workers for the workers.

For the realisation of this task I propose to the congress to accept a number of regulations to which I shall refer later. But that is not all.

The All Russian Central Executive Committee.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee carries on its functions on the basis of the ever growing stronger Soviets and their amalgamations as an All Russian Soviet of Workers and Peasants Deputies.

The first question which demanded solution at our Congress is the completion of the construction of this roof of the soviet building. You will see in the constitution that in the intervals between congresses the chief organ of the Soviet apparatus, the supreme authority in Soviet Russia is the All Russian Central Executive Committee. It enjoys a number of rights and privileges which make it during the intervals between congresses actually responsible for the fate of Soviet Russia. However, until the present time, during the two years of our life which can justly be called a fighting life the work and the rights of the Central Executive Committee itself have not yet been regulated. The constitution does not provide either the date, the manner, nor upon whose initiative or demand the Cen. Ex. Com. is to be convened. This institution of primary importance has not been completed.

The question was raised here as to the reason of the rare meetings of the Soviet and of the Cen. Executive Committee. The sole and correct reply to this is that we were far too busy, and are still far too busy and seem likely to continue to be too busy with military work to be able to afford ourselves the luxury of regular and constant meetings of the C. E. C. The hard times however are passing and in view of this we propose to make the following step, and in the name of the Congress to regulate the question and exactly to define the work of the All Rus. Cen. Ex. Com.

The first question that arises here is the following. The A. R. C. E. C. is not an organ of bourgeois parliamentarism, it is not an assembly of people specially authorised for legislation, men sitting in the capital and engaged in no other work than that of legislation. On the contrary. In accordance with the essence and the spirit of our revolutionary theory and practice the A. R. C. E. C. consists of men who whilst engaged in the work of legislation are at the same time actually carrying out such legislation in practice and in this manner combine the practice of life with the regulations of the central government.

This is the reason why we possess no organ which could meet daily, setting aside its ordinary work. On the contrary the Centr. Com. of the Russian Communist party has decided in accordance to which you have just confirmed the composition of the Central Executive committee which is mainly composed of men from the local Soviets. If it had been said to you: give us your local men, let them sit in Moscow, detach themselves from local life and engage here in legislation, you would probably not do so, replying that that would effect the interests of the said localities and the interests of socialist construction as a whole. A way must be found out of this position.

The solution lies in convening the A. R. C. E. C. for regular sessions at definite periods so that it is known exactly when the A. R. Cen. Ex. Com. meets, to enable local representatives to come to these sittings, to arrive at such sittings in due time so as to enrich this organ with local forces, local impressions and local experience. In order to avoid in the A. R. C. E. C. the hitherto prevailing state of things we propose to pass the following regulation: «that the A. R. Cen. Ex. Com. is to be convened not less then once in two months for sessional sittings».

The Presidium of the A. R. C. E. C.

In connection with this we take up the second question dealing with the head institutions of our Soviet system which have also not been regularised until the present time. In accordance with paragraph 33 of our Constitution the «A. R. C. E. C. forms the Council of Peoples' Commissaries for the purpose of general administration of the affairs of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic». The Council of Peoples Commissaries is an assembly of comrades who are at the head of the various departments. But their power is shared by another organ of the A. R. C. E. C., namely the Presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. If as we propose, a system of sessional sittings of the A. R. C. E. C. will be introduced the tasks of the Presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. will inevitably widen; on the other hand experience has already shown that the presidium has to deal with administrative affairs that are also under the authority of the Council of Peoples Commissaries.

Until the present time our Constitution fails to draw a line between the work of the Council of Peoples Commissaries and the Presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. and perhaps at the time the Constitution was written it was not yet possible exactly to define the functions of the Presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. On the basis of experience we now propose to you to fix the rights and the functions of the Presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. in the following wording:

«The VII th All Russian Congress of Soviets defines the sphere of activity and the tasks of the Presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. as follows:

1. The presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. conducts the sittings of the A. R. C. E. C.
2. The presidium prepares all material for the above sittings.
3. Submits projects of decrees for consideration to the plenary sittings of the A. R. C. E. C.
4. Takes charge of the execution of the decisions of the A. R. C. E. C.
5. Carries on negotiations in the name of the A. R. C. E. C.
6. Represents the leading centre for guiding all work both in central and local institutions.
7. Considers questions of amnesty, confirms presentations of the «Order of the Red Banner» and solves other questions of administration.
8. Between the intervals of its sittings the presidium

enjoys the right of confirming decisions of the Council of People's Commissaries; it is also empowered to suspend the decisions of the above presenting such decisions of the Peoples Commissaries to the forthcoming plenary sitting of the A. R. C. E. C., appoints individual Peoples Commissaries upon the recommendation of the Council of Peoples Commissaries».

These, comrades, are the two principle items concerning the central institutions in regard to which we have acquired a definite practice which has not as yet been recorded, fixed or provided for by the Constitution and by the establishment of which we make the next step, a progressive step in completing the building up of the Soviet institutions.

Congresses of Soviets.

We shall now deal with the question of the Congresses of Soviets. The gubernia, ouyezd and volost congress of Soviets represent, as you know, the supreme organ of the local administration of the toilers. Everything that stands below the C. E. C. is in the hands of the local Soviets; these are distributed in a definite ladder so to speak: it begins with the gubernia congress of Soviets, following this is the ouyezd Congress of soviets and so on. Until the present time it has not been exactly defined which particular Soviets and Soviet organisations can participate in this common Soviet life, in the creation of these organs—the Congresses of Soviets.

Practice has shown us that those norms which are provided for in exact words in the constitution and according to which are convened the gubernia, ouyezd and volost congresses do not embrace to the full extent all the soviets which spring up in the localities and which express the ever extending organisation of the power of the toilers and first of all of the proletarian and poorest sections of the population. The time has now come when all these organisations should be included into a general system of Congresses of Soviets; we make this obligatory in the following statement.

«The congresses of gubernia, ouyezd and volost Soviets consist of representatives of all councils on the territory of the given administrative unit, as well as of those localities (settlements, factories, works etc.), where questions of administration are decided by general meetings of electors» (paragraph 57 of the Constitution).

Not one single Soviet, not one single establishment of the working class through the medium of which this class of

toilers administrates the State can possibly be excluded from the system of representation. Not a single amalgamation of the working masses who possess political power whether in the shape of volost Soviets or of factory and works committees etc., can be left outside the frame of the Soviet Construction, or be excluded from the system of those institutions which are creating the supreme organs of the Soviet Government.

In paragraph 57 of the Constitution provision is made for such cases when we are able from the system of Soviets of elected deputies to come to, and on some occasions we are even obliged to do so, to the system of direct administration by the toilers themselves. This applies to small settlements, where it is possible to entrust all affairs of administration directly to the general meeting of the toilers. They should also be included in the system of the Congress of Soviets and should send deputies to the respective Congresses. This is the bulk of those organisations of administration and of self administration of the workers which our Congress of Soviets includes. On what basis then are taking place the Congresses of Soviets? The Congresses of Soviets are composed in the following manner:

a) The gubernia Soviets are composed of representatives of town Soviets, of soviets of factory and works settlements with a population above 5,000 inhabitants and of volost congresses on the basis of : from volost congresses—1 deputy for every 10,000 inhabitants, from soviets of towns, factory and works settlements and factories and works—1 deputy for every 2,000 electors but not exceeding 300 deputies for the whole gubernia: in the event of an ouyezd congress being convened directly before the gubernia congress, the elections from the volosts are conducted not by volost congresses but by these ouyezd congresses of soviets.

b) The ouyezd congresses of soviets are composed of all the councils on the territory of the given ouyezd (district) including the soviets of the ouyezd town as follows: from the village soviets—1 deputy for every 1000 inhabitants for soviets of towns and factory and works settlements 1 deputy for every 200 electors but not above 300 delegates for the whole ouyezd.

Note: In those cases and at those factories and works where questions of administration, according to the note to Art. 57 are decided not by the Soviets but by a general meeting of electors, deputies to the

ouyezd congress are being elected at these general meeting.

c) Volost soviets are composed of representatives of all the Soviets on the territory of the volost on the basis of one deputy for every 100 inhabitants.

Here with regard to the letter of the Constitution there is an amendment: soviets of factory committees are introduced. I say with regard to the letter because the spirit, the construction, the essence of the constitution is to the effect that all settlements of workers and peasants and consequently the factory and works' settlement should be included in the congresses.

Where the Soviets are Formed.

We shall now deal with the question of the Soviets themselves. Both in the sections and in the party conferences as well as in the commissions various opinions were expressed with regard to this question and in the resolution which was distributed among the members of the congress a few deviations and changes from the constitution were proposed in the sense that certain ouyezd and certain government towns may not organise soviets. I in the name of the congress propose that no such decisions suspending or prohibiting the organisation of soviets in either ouyezd or gubernia towns be adopted. On the contrary, I consider it most important and in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution and the demands of the Labour State to establish soviets wherever there are workers and labour elements who enjoy the franchise according to our constitution; that everywhere soviets should grow up and thrive and that as great as possible a mass of workers should be attracted through them into administration. We propose to adhere strictly to the Constitution in which it is said that «Towns and settlements elect their soviets».

We know that the war has absorbed a mass of our best men and that at times a state of things is created when in one or another gubernia or ouyezd town it is difficult to establish a soviet and to establish conditions of its regular work. We cannot consider this normal; we cannot fix this as a regular rule, we must be firm on the point that as soon as military circumstances and the economic disorganisation will permit us to pay as much attention as possible to this, we shall establish soviets wherever there are working electors. For this reason we do not propose to make any restrictions in the

matter of establishing soviets or of their independent work; what we do propose is on the contrary to adhere to the Constitution which demands the soviets. In such places where at the present moment we cannot establish Soviets or maintain their permanent work—this is our temporary misfortune. As soon as the workers and the peasants will recuperate after the war they will take up the organisation of soviets and the training of the masses for administration.

The Amalgamation of Executive Committees.

The question arose in the sections regarding the amalgamation not of various soviets but of various executive committees. There were various projects, some proposed to amalgamate the town executive committees with the gubernia executive committees, whilst others proposed to amalgamate the town with the ouyezd. I suppose that in this respect also the time has not yet come to fix anything by decisions of congresses, because the experience which we have lived through was a hard experience of hard work, an experience of war and not of free socialist construction. On numerous occasions and even at the present time we are under the obligation of uniting executive committees for the reason of our shortage of men; but to draw the conclusion that this is the proper thing to do, that this should be a rule of one administrative organ for both town and gubernia or for gubernia and ouyezd—is wrong. On the contrary we can say when the war will come to an end, when peace will make it possible for us to devote ourselves to the cause for which the revolution took place, that is to say to economic, cultural, educational construction we shall require organs which will serve the needs of town, ouyezd or gubernia. They can of course amalgamate by means of mutual representation but there is no doubt whatever that our poverty stricken ouyezds, our starving towns and our disorganised gubernias will require a corresponding department of the executive committee which will feed it, clothe it, build its roads and railways and so forth. By uniting the executive committees we are closing our own road to future activity. On the contrary we must leave our hands entirely free and only when we obtain experience in free peaceful construction can we adopt corresponding decisions. For the present it is sufficient to take no note of our defects and it will suffice to say that if in certain localities owing to the shortage of men it became necessary to unite gubernia, town

and ouyezd executive committees such union can be brought about only with the confirmation of the Central Executive Committee. Therefore instead of all those proposals which were made here and which amounted to as much as an order to the localities to amalgamate in one way or another, we leave this to the decision of the local organs, and the final solution is to be left to the Central Executive Committee which is fully represented by your representatives. The resolution states: «The decision of the local organs in regard to the amalgamation of the executive committees are subject in each individual case to the decision of the Central Executive Committee».

The Work of the Soviets.

The following item concerns the question of the character of the works of the Soviets. In this respect we are guided by the instruction of our last party congress.

The Soviets and plenums as political organisations are often subject to decay, men are drawn in the purely technical side of the work in regard to organisation of transport, to the organisation of workshops for military equipment and so on. A general meeting of soviets is rare and even when they do assemble it is only to obtain information, to hear a few speeches and so on. We do not consider this as normal. We find that if 15 or 20 men take part in administration they will against their own will become bureaucrats, however much they may speak against bureaucratism. The wide participation in administration of the workers themselves is imperative. It must be firmly stated that the plenum of the soviet should develop its activity in all directions; it is the master, all the lower organs are responsible to it. When the war will come to an end all the best representatives of the working class which are now at the front will fill the soviets. I propose on the basis of the resolution of the party congress the following:

«All questions concerning the local and general conditions of life are to be brought before the general sittings of the Soviets. The functions of the soviets are not only those of an apparatus of agitation and information but are also to serve as a business mechanism. Every member of the soviets as far as possible is immediately called upon to execute a definite State task.

«All the members of the soviets are bound to submit a report to their constituencies not less than once a fortnight.

A member of the soviet who fails to offer good reasons for his not executing the above regulation on two occasions is deprived of his mandate and a new deputy is elected in his place».

Central and Local Organs.

I will now consider the question of executive committees. The question of the rights, construction and functions of the executive committees is one of the most acute questions and of the most vital importance. There are two painful matters connected with this; one of them is the gradual transfer of the functions of administration from wide sittings of workers' deputies to smaller collegiates. In the regulations which I have proposed to you we attempt to extend the rights and the work of the general sittings of the soviets. The second painful matter is that the local soviets often come into collision with the central institutions and a certain struggle took place as well as conflicts between the organs of local labour administration and the organs established directly by the centre which were intended to realise the will of the central organisations; it was a struggle between the localities and the centre.

The question of centralisation and decentralisation has not as yet been settled. So far we have not found a proper equilibrium; nor can such an equilibrium be demanded of us. If a bourgeois constitutionalist or Scientist would demand, as Scheidemann does of our comrades of the left section of the independents and of the German communists, that we should put on paper clearly and precisely how we decide questions of interrelation between the local and central organs, in this he could only show his own stupidity. It is impossible to solve the question on paper as to how to combine centralising processes which are necessary in the labour state in order to unite and to put under control of the State as a whole its entire economic life with the process of attracting into administration fresh masses through the local soviets.—it is impossible to do this until we shall have obtained the benefit of the experience of millions of people.

The Extension of the Rights of the Local Soviets.

We can already say that there is a need to extend the rights of the soviets and of the local executive committees. We call upon the local committees—in the second paragraph of the resolution which I am about to read to you—to extend its

control and supervision over all institutions which are on the territory of the gubernia. We place the greatest faith in the class instinct of the workers and of the poorest masses of the peasantry. We know that in our construction we can get no assistance from no book whatsoever. Whatever we do create is effected by the creative genius of the lower stratum of the workers. This creative genius should find its definite sphere and all doors should be opened to it. By its decisions the Congress of Soviets records the fact that the local organs have sufficiently grown up and acquired experience in practical work in order to include without apprehension all the institutions created by the central organs into the local institutions. In the resolution which I am about to read to you you will see that the head departments and central organs in the shape of their local gubernia, ouyezd and district institutions should henceforward be included in the general system of the local executive committees. Thus it will be seen that in the question of the extension of the activity of the soviets as well as in the question of the extension of their rights we go far ahead of what we could comparatively do at that moment when two years ago we only began the construction of a state entity out of the local soviets which arose enveloped in the battle smoke of the revolution.

The Unity of Soviet Russia.

With the assistance of the local soviets, of the activity of the council of People's Commissaries and of the Central Executive Committee we have been able to unite Soviet Russia into a complete whole. We know now that the instructions emanating from the centre whether they concern military mobilisation, fuel mobilisation or the supply of corn will penetrate into every part of Russia and as far as that is possible will be carried out by the local authorities. We can now make one more step forward and free the hands of the local organisations and the local soviets, fully confident that these local soviets will put the interests of the whole Russian Proletarian Republic above the interests of their parish or village, of their ouyezd or gubernia town. Confident of this we wish to make the next step and we are again confident that if you will pass the resolution which we submit to you, this will signify the growth of Soviet Construction and the further attraction to state administration of the wide masses of workers and peasants. It is then that we shall be able to give a reply to the questions of what the soviet

system represents. The Soviet system represents what the workers and the poorest peasantry, having taken the state machinery in their own hands and removed from it all the relics of the capitalist classes, have made it by learning themselves to build, to strengthen and to extend the new proletarian republic (applause). I will read to you the proposed regulations and attempt to deal with separate questions which give rise to either doubts or dispute.

The Executive Committees.

First point.

«The Executive committees are elected by congresses of Soviets; in the intervals between congresses they represent the supreme organs of the Soviet Government in their respective territories and are subject to the executive committee next in authority, to the All Russian Central Executive Committee and to the Council of People's Commissaries».

For this no provision was made in the Constitution, because this question had to be decided in practical life. We are now, however, to formulate it clearly. I only wish to point out that the Executive Committee which is being created from below by the labour soviets is subject only to the higher executive committee, to the All-Russian C. E. C., and to the Coun. of P. C., but is not responsible to any department in particular.

Control of the Gubernia Executive Committee.

Second point:

«The Gubernia Executive Committee has the right to control and supervise the activity of all the government institutions, whether of a permanent or of a temporary character, which are not sections of the executive committee but are to submit immediately reports on to the corresponding central institutions». (The above does not apply to institutions connected with the active army).

Comrades this is no doubt an extension not of the theoretic rights but of the practical functions of the executive committees. We know that on the territory of the gubernia we have a number of institutions which are neither directly subject to the gubernia executive committee nor are they created by it or are its departments but work hand in hand with it very often dealing with the same matters which are being dealt with by some departments of the executive committee.

Very often the gubernia executive committee could not come and see what is being done there from the point of view of the general state interests and to define the manner in which it may be possible to assist the work of a given institution on the territory of the gubernia. The gubernia executive committee is however, responsible for the whole gubernia and should therefore have the right of supervising all. The regulation makes an exception with regard to the active army. Once we have made a provision that only institutions of the active army are excluded from the control and the rights of supervision of the gubernia executive committee, that means that all the other institutions are subject to this control and supervision. The congress gives to the local institutions new rights in practice. But together with these new duties are laid upon us. Once the right of control and supervision of the gubernia executive committee is extended to all the local branches of head departments, central organs and other sections of central administration,—the gubernia executive committee is made responsible for the conduct of work at these institutions, whether it is sufficiently energetic and whether the instructions of the centre and so forth are fully carried out.

Executive Committee Departments.

Point three:

«For the execution of all the work under the auspices of the gubernia institutions and for the purpose of carrying out the regulations of the higher executive committees and of the central organs, departments are to be established by the executive committees. The gubernia executive committee forms the following departments: 1) administrative, 2) Military, 3) Justice, 4) Labour, Social Maintenance, 5) Public Education, 6) Posts and Telegraphs, 7) Finance, 8) Agriculture, 9) Food supply, 10) State Control, 11) Economic Council 12) Public Health, 13) Statistics, 14) Extraordinary Commission, 15) Communal. Ouyezds form the same departments with the exception of Posts, Telegraph, Justice and Extraordinary Commissions».

Thus the local gubernia Executive Committees should have 15 departments. These departments are subject to the executive committee; the gubernia economic councils are likewise organs of the E. C. Such departments are being formed under the ouyezd executive committee with the exception of Post and Telegraphs, Justice, and the Extraordinary Commission. You know that these departments are

no longer under the authority of the ouyezd Executive Committee.

«The closing down of existing departments as well as the formation of new departments is effected by the Executive Committees upon agreement with the corresponding Peoples' Commissariats and with the confirmation of the Council of the Peoples' Commissaries».

We have a right to fifteen departments. If we wish to close down any one department we must apply to the respective Peoples' Commissariat. Should we desire to open a new department, should any one Executive Committee come across a new branch of industry which is not foreseen by the 15 departments, should they require funds for the organisation of such a department it will not be able to do so on its own responsibility, but will be obliged to secure the consent of the corresponding Peoples Commissariat.

The number of departments of volost Executive Committees, at soviets of factory and works settlements and townlets is to be defined by the gubernia Executive Committee.

'The Rights and the Functions of the Departments.'

In defining the rights and the functions of the departments of Executive Committees we must apply that principle of twofold dependance which has created the unity of administration of the entire Soviet Russia and at the same time gives scope to the local powers and subjects all the local institutions to the supervision of the supreme local organ—the Executive Committee. This method of construction is applied according to the following regulations:

All measures undertaken by a department whether of practical importance or one of principle, as well as all estimates before their presentation to the centre are to be submitted by the department to be confirmed by the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee departments are subject to the local Executive Committees; they are obliged to carry out all the instructions, and orders of the local Executive Committee and of the corresponding department of the higher Executive Committee and of the Corresponding Peoples' Commissariat.

In the case where the department of the Executive Committee finds it for any reason impossible to carry out the instructions of the Peoples' Commissariat or of the higher Executive Committee and its departments—the said E. C.

should immediately inform the presidium to this effect; the Presidium without suspending the execution of the said orders or instructions is to acquaint the gubernia E. C. and the Council of Peoples' Commissaries or the A. R. Central Executive Committee immediately regarding its opinion of the necessity of withdrawing such instructions; the ouyezd E. C. applies to the gubern. E. C. etc; its reason for this is also to be given at the same time to the organ responsible for the instructions in question.

The Peoples' Commissariats and the Departments of the E. C. give instructions to the corresponding Department; all particularly important instructions are made known by them to the E. C. which is to take charge of their due and correct execution.

The Peoples' Commissariats and the Departments have the right of communicating directly with the corresponding departments of all the E. C. of lower authority. In those cases where the Peoples Commissariat or the Department of the E. C. communicate with lower organs without applying to the intermediary authorities they should nevertheless keep the authorities in question informed: that means that when, for instance, the Peoples' Commissariat communicates a department of the ouyezd E. C., or a gubernia department communicates with one of a volost, the intermediate authorities are to be kept informed of the fact.

As a general rule the E. C. and their departments communicate with the higher E. C. and their respective departments as well as with the Peoples' Commissariats through the corresponding intermediary authorities: the volost E. C. through the ouyezd E. C., the ouyezd E. C. through the gubernia; but this deprives them of the right, when that is found necessary, of directly communicating with the higher organs.

Directors of Departments and Collegiates in Departments.

What is the construction of these departments? At the head of these are directors, who, however need not necessarily be members of the E. C.; a Collegiate is formed to work with the director.

By regulation of the E. C. in certain cases Collegiates need not be formed. There was a conflict over this point. Many comrades insisted upon the complete exclusion of collegiates. On numerous occasions when the army demanded all that can be spared for the front we were driven to reduce these collegiates and at times to abolish them altogether.

This however, does not at all signify that we are on principle against collegiate administration. On the contrary our appreciation of the collegiates is not due to the fact that at these matters are fully discussed; this in itself is harmful at times. Often one comrade can manage the work far better than can be done by a collegiate. But for us builders of the proletarian State, collegiates become important as organs in which the workers and the peasants are called upon to take part in administration, to be trained for administration; for this reason we allow only one excuse for not forming collegiates and that is when there is an extreme shortage of man power.

Next item. The director and the members of the collegiates are elected by the Executive Committee. The Peoples' Commissary in question enjoys the right of demanding the withdrawal of a director. Cases of differences of opinion on this point are to be decided by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. This illustrates that same twofold dependence which is one of the basic principles in the construction of our system of government. We can divide Soviet Russia into separate goubernia or ouyezd amalgamations; we must necessarily possess one chief lever by which all the Soviet organisations are united. This is to be expressed by the fact that the Gubernia E. C. elects a director and itself confirms him. And it is only in cases when a Peoples' Commissary can give fair reasons to substantiate his opinion that the director in question is not suitable that he can demand the withdrawal of such a director. Should the E. C. disagree to this the dispute is then decided by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

The responsibility for the activity of the departments, the precision and timeliness of the fulfillment of instructions is laid by the Central authorities both upon the department directors and upon the E. C. as a whole. With regard to the relation between the department director and the collegiate this question is settled by us in the same way as it was decided in the Constitution concerning the relations between the Peoples' Commissaries and their Collegiates.

The director of a department enjoys the right of personally solving questions concerning his department and to inform his collegiates of his decision. In the event of disagreement of the collegiates regarding one or another of the decisions of the director the collegiate is to put the said question before the Execut. Comm., without however suspending the execution of the decision in question.

Thus, comrades, you see that these provisions fully embrace all the rights, functions, interdependence and the entire system of the organisation of the Ex. Com. which are at the present time the actual leading bodies of Workers'—Peasants' administration and of the Workers'—Peasants' government.

The Executive Committee and the Economic Council.

There remain two more questions which have raised here numerous debates and disputes; these questions deal on the one hand with the interrelation between the E. C. and the department, the Head Departments and the central organs of the Supreme Economic Council, and on the other hand between the gubernia Economic Councils and their interrelation with the Ex. Committees. We propose the following wording with regard to the Departments, Head Departments and Central organs:

«All the local gubernia, ouyezd, district and other administrative economic organs or branches, chief departments and central institutions are part of the gubernia Council of Public Economy».

This is the solution of the question which was a cause of much aggravation and unpleasantness in the localities and for which until the present time no solution had been found. All the local organs of the Supreme Economic Council are included in the Gubernia Council of Public Economy.

You have noticed that in the enumeration of the Executive Committee Departments are also included the Economic Councils. The regulation which was just read includes all the local Branches of Head Departments and Central organs of the Supreme Economic Council into the sphere of the activity and under the control and supervision of the local executive committees. All these become departments of the Executive Committees. This signifies that: the centralised guidance of the economic life, the general industrial plan, and the general productive programme should be preserved and supplemented with local forces in the Ex. Com. and a greater influence should be secured for it than has been done hitherto.

We now, comrades, have to solve only one more question, namely what is to be done with those branches of industry which are united on a general State scale. For the construction of locomotives, carriages, rails and appliances we have brought about the amalgamation of the former capitalist

enterprises, which belonged to individual trading firms, limited companies and private owners, we have formed of these enterprises one industrial body and amalgamating them into one single enterprise we have abolished competition, we have attained the possibility of transferring the best workers, technicians and mechanics from one factory or works to another, we have a system of mutual interchange of machinery and we are able to carry on a general registration. Are we to separate these amalgamated administrations, these leading productive units and to divide to the administration of the various *ouyezds* for the one reason that, let us say, an important works like that of Kolomna which serves the whole of Russia is to be given over to the administration of the Kolomna Soviet because it happens to be situated in the town of Kolomna? We had repeated occurrences in the case of the district Leather and district Spirit departments, or with some purchasing bureaux when it happened that these failing to submit to the *gubernia* economic plan disturbed the entire state plan and often created an impossible position; when, as an instance, there was a great need experienced for nails in a certain locality where the respective institutions had these nails and kept them. Recognising the necessity of changing the old method and of making it binding upon all the local *gubernia* and *ouyezd* organs of all the Chief Departments and Central organs to join the local *gubernia* Economic Council and thus regularise their work on the same lines with all our *gubernia* departments, to come under the general administration of the *gubernia* Ex. Com.—we point out at the same time that it is not possible so simply to solve the question regarding the interrelation between the central organs of the Supreme Economic Council and the local Soviet at some Sormovo or Kolomna Works or at a Moscow electric station—which are not of a local but of a general state significance. Therefore we propose the following note:

«Detailed instructions defining the rights and obligations of the general and local institutions of the Supreme Economic Council with regard to particularly important State factories and socialised trusts etc., should be drawn up by the Supreme Economic Council and established through the Council of Peoples' Commissaries and through the All-Russian E. C. It is imperative that these instructions should preserve the submission of all the socialised trusts and of the more important State enterprises to their central administrations as well as to define the extent and the forms of subordination and dependance of these enterprises to the *gubernia* Council

of Public Economy in the interests of a rapid and proper satisfaction of the local demands».

Comrades we must all of us have a perfectly clear idea of the essence of this note. When the proposal was made to subject all the gubernia organs of the head departments and of the central institutions to the local executive committee certain comrades proposed simply to exclude from the rule enterprises of particular state importance,—enterprises which are working for the whole of Russia. In the above note it says that these enterprises are to a certain degree subject or should be subject to the control of the local Soviets, and in this manner, as an instance, the Sormovo works with which the Nizhgorod gubernia executive committee had no connection until the present time, will under these conditions to a certain extent be thrown under the influence of the latter. Here consequently we must conclude that there are two steps in a direction quite different to that in which we were going until the present time. In the first place all the local institutions of the head departments and of the central organs are joined under the gubernia Economic Councils. In the second place it is pointed out that in socialised trusts and in enterprises of particular state importance the local soviets should have a certain amount of influence.

Administrative Economic Division of Russia.

Now, comrades, there are left only a few separate resolutions. There was one question which often created numerous conflicts. There are recurrent attempts to create administrative or economic units on a territory of a given gubernia or on that of the whole of Soviet Russia. One or another people's commissariat guided by a particular point of view which may be quite correct as far as the commissariat in question is concerned, strive to unite districts in which they are interested from the aspect of either provisions, public hygiene or from the point of view of the better working of the Supreme Economic Council to establish on the territory of the given gubernia or of a number of neighbouring gubernias special districts; this striving led in certain localities to an unbearable state of things. We propose the following:

«The VII All Russian Congress instructs the A. R. C. E. C. with the elaboration of practical questions regarding a new administrative economic division of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic. Until the solution of this question by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee the

formation of new administrative economic units as well as an introduction of a new district division of either the whole or of a part of the territory of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic according to branches of industry or of forms of administration is in every individual case to be solved by the Council of the People's Commissaries upon the preliminary discussion of the question by the E. C. and the people's commissariats interested».

Henceforward the amalgamation of districts will not take place as it does at present when special districts were created in accordance with a regulation of the of People's Commissaries but only after a preliminary discussion with all the executive committees and people's commissariats interested and upon the confirmation of the decisions by the Council of the People's Commissaries. We are now faced with a new task. A new administrative economic division of Russia must be established not on old principles but on new principles; whilst the former consideration was that of the individual Governor of provinces the new consideration should be the inhabitants of the said gubernia.

Conclusions.

We are solving two principal questions which most of all interested our congress: the question of the extension of the labour soviets, the revival of its activity, of making of the Soviets what they should be, that is to say an assembly of deputies of the workers and of the poorest peasants who are being trained in these soviets for state administration in order to be enabled in the future to do away with every form of state; the other question is how to establish normal relations between the institutions of the centres and of the localities which are represented by the local soviets bearing the greater part of the work in order that the central institutions should not be a setback to these soviets but should help to carry out the work which is being performed by the local inhabitants.

I propose to you to accept a number resolutions. They are all directed towards one end, that the government power in Russia should actually belong to the soviets of workers', peasants', red army and cossacks' deputies and that they should all together create an indestructible basis for the triumph of the cause of the workers and peasants. (Applause).

Appendix.

Decision of the VII All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

I.

The Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

1. The presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee conducts the sittings of the A. R. C. E. C.
2. The presidium prepares all the material for the above sittings.
3. Submits projects of decrees for the consideration of the plenary sittings of the A. R. C. E. C.
4. Takes charge of the execution of the regulations of the A. R. C. E. C.
5. Carries on negotiations in the name of the A. R. C. E. C.
6. Represents the leading centre for guiding all work both in central and local institutions.
7. Considers questions of amnesty, confirms presentations of the «Order of the Red Banner» and solves other questions of administration.
8. Between the intervals of its sittings the Presidium enjoys the right of confirming decisions of the Council of People's Commissaries; it is also empowered to suspend the decisions of the above, bringing forward such decisions for the consideration of the forthcoming plenary sitting of the A. R. C. E. C., appoints individual Peoples Commissaries upon presentation by the Council of People's Commissaries.

II.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee is convened by the presidium of the A. R. C. E. C. for sessions every two months; special sittings of the A. R. C. E. C. are being convened by the Presidium on the proposal of the Council of People's Commissaries or on the demand of $\frac{1}{3}$ of the members of the A. R. C. E. C.

III.

Congresses of Soviets.

The Congresses (of gubernia, ouezd and volost Soviets) consist of representatives of all Soviets on the territory of the given administrative unit, as well as of those localities (settlements, factories, works etc.), where questions of administration are decided by general meetings of electors (§ 57 of the Constitution), on the following basis:

Congresses of Soviets are comprised in the following manner:

a) The Gubernia Soviets consist of representatives of town Soviets, of Soviets of factory and work settlements with a population above 5,000 inhabitants and of volost congresses on the basis of: from volost congresses—1 deputy for every 10,000 inhabitants, from Soviets of towns, factory and works settlements, and factory and works unconnected with settlements—1 deputy of every 2,000 electors; but not exceeding 300 deputies for the whole gubernia; in the event of an ouyezd congress being convened directly before the gubernia congress volost elections are conducted not by volost congresses but by these ouyezd congresses of Soviets.

Note. Gubernia towns where there are no Soviets send representatives to the gubernia congress on the basis of 1 deputy to every 10,000 inhabitants.

b) The ouyezd convention of Soviets consists of all the soviets on the territory of the given ouyezd or district including the Soviet of the ouyezd town on the basis of: for the village Soviets—1 deputy for every thousand inhabitants, for Soviets of towns, and factory and works settlements as well as of Soviets of factories and works outside settlements—1 delegate for every 200 electors, but not above 300 delegates for the whole ouyezd.

c) Volost Soviets consist of the representatives of all the Soviets on the territory of the volost on the basis of one deputy for every 100 inhabitants.

Note. In those settlements and on those factories and works where administrative questions, in accordance to the note to paragraph 57 of the Constitution, are solved not by the Soviets, but by a general meeting of electors—the deputies for the ouyezd congress are elected at the general meetings.

Soviet Congresses are convened by the executive organs of the Soviet Government (the Executive Committees) of corresponding territories at the decision of the latter upon the demand of local Soviets counting not less than a third of the whole population of the given district but at all events not less than twice a year in oblasts, gubernias and ouyezds, and not less than every three months in volosts.

IV.

On Soviets.

All questions concerning the local and general conditions of life are to be brought before the general sittings of the Soviets. The functions of the Soviets are to be not only those of an apparatus of agitation and information but serve also as business mechanism. Every member of the Soviet is immediately called upon in so far as possible to execute a definite State work.

All the members of the Soviets are obliged to submit report to their constituencies not less than once a fortnight. A member of a Soviet who fails to give good reasons for not carrying out the above regulation on two occasions is deprived of his mandate and a new deputy is elected in his place.

V.

The Executive Committees.

1. The Executive committees are elected by Soviet Congresses; in the intervals between congresses they represent the supreme organ of the Soviet Government in their territory and are subject to the Executive Committee next in authority, to the All Russian Central Executive Committee and to the Council of the Peoples' Commissaries.

2. The Gubernia Executive Committee has the right to control and revise the activity of all the gubernia institutions whether of a permanent or a temporary character, which are not sections of the Executive Committee and are to submit immediate reports to the corresponding central institutions (the above does not apply to institutions connected with the active army).

3. For the execution of all the work under the authority of the government (local) institutions and for the purpose of carrying out the decisions of the higher Executive Committees and of the Central organs departments are to be established by the executive Committees. The Gubernia Executive Committee forms the following departments: 1) Administration, 2) Military, 3) Justice, 4) Labour and Social maintenance, 5) Public Education, 6) Post and Telegraph, 7) Finance, 8) Agriculture, 9) Provisions, 10) State Control, 11) Council of Public Economy, 12) Public Health, 13) Statistics, 14) Extraordinary Commission, 15) Communal. At ouyezdts the same departments are opened with the exception of posts, telegraphs, justice and Extraordinary Commissions.

The closing down of existing departments as well as the formation of new departments is effected by the Executive Committees upon agreement with the corresponding Peoples' Commissariats and the confirmation of the Council of the Peoples' Commissaries.

Note 1. The number of departments in volosts, Executive committees, in Soviets at factory and works settlements as well as in townlets are to be defined by the Gubernia Executive Committee.

Note 2. All local gubernia economic councils amalgamate with the gubernia land departments under the general guidance of the gubernia Executive Committees. District economic Councils unite with Ouyezd Land Department under the general guidance of the Ouyezd Executive Committee.

Note 3. All the local, (government, ouyezd, regional and so forth) administrative economic organs of branches, chief departments and Central institutions are part of the Gubernia Economic Council.

Note 4. Detailed instructions defining the rights and duties of the Central and local institutions of the Supreme Economic Council with regard to particularly important State factories, socialised trusts, etc., should be drawn up by the Supreme Economic Council and carried through by the Council of the Peoples' Commissaries and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. It is imperative that these instructions should preserve the subordination of all the socialised trusts and of the more important State enterprises to their central administrations as well as to define the extent and the forms of the subordination of these enterprises to the

Gubernia Economic Council in the interests of a rapid and proper satisfaction of the local demands.

4. Collegiates are formed beside the directors.

Note. By regulation of the Executive Committee in certain cases collegiates are not formed.

The director and the members of the collegiate are elected by the Executive Committee. Every Peoples Commissary enjoys the right of demanding the withdrawal of a director. Cases of difference of opinion on this point are to be decided by the Presidium of the All Russian Central Executive Committee.

5. Responsibility is laid upon the Directors of Departments as well as upon the Executive Committees for the activity of the Department and for the due execution of the instructions of the institutions of the Central Government.

6. All measures undertaken by the department whether of practical importance or one of principle as well as the estimates before their presentation to the centre are to be submitted by the departments for confirmation to the Executive Committee.

7. The director of a department enjoys the right of solely solving questions concerning to his department and to inform the members of his collegiate of his decision. In the event of disagreement of the collegiate regarding a certain decision of the director the collegiate is to bring the said question before the Executive Committee, without however suspending the execution of the said decision.

8. Executive Committee departments are subject to the local executive Committees, they are obliged to carry out all the instructions and orders of the local Executive Committee and of the corresponding department of the higher Executive Committee and of the correspondeng Peoples' Commissariat.

9. In a case where the department of the Executive Committee finds it for any reason impossible to carry out the instructions of the Peoples' Commissariat or of the higher E. C. and its department—the said department should immediately inform the presidium on the matter; the Presidium is not to suspend the execution of the said orders or instructions but is to acquaint the Gubernia E. C. and the Council of Peoples Commissaries or the Central Executive Committee immediately on the necessity of withdrawing such instructions; at the same time its reason for this is also to be given to the organ which issued the instructions in question.

10. The Peoples' Commissariats and the Departments of the E. C. issue instructions to the corresponding departments; all particularly important instructions are made known by them to the E. C. which takes charge of their proper and due execution.

11. The Peoples' Commissariats and the departments have the right of communicating directly with the corresponding departments of all the E. C. of lesser authority. In those cases where the Peoples' Commissariats or the departments of the E. C. communicate with lower organs without applying to the intermediary authorities they should nevertheless keep the authorities in question informed; that is to say that when (for instance, the Peoples Commissariat communicates with a department or branch of the Ouyezd E. C., or a Gubernia department communicates with one of a volost, etc.) the intermediate authorities are to be kept informed.

12. As a general rule the E. C. and their departments communicate with the higher E. C. and their departments as well as with the Peoples' Commissariats through the corresponding intermediary authorities; for instance, the Volost E. C. through the ouyezd E. C. the ouyezd E. C. through the Gubernia; this however deprives them of the right, when that is found necessary, of direct communication with the higher organs.

13. For the direction of all the current work connected with the administration of the corresponding territory and the application of the regulations and decrees of the Central organs of the Government the E. C. elects a presidium; the Gubernia executive Committee elects a presidium consisting of 3—5 members, the ouyezd E. C.—of 3 members.

14. The decision of the local organs concerning the fusing of the Executive Committees is subject in each individual case to confirmation by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

The VII-th All-Russian Congress instructs the A. R. C. E. C. to elaborate practical questions regarding a new administrative economic division of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

Until the solution of this question by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee the formation of the new administrative economic units, as well as the introduction of a new district division of either the whole or of a part of the territory of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic according to branches of industry or to forms of administration, is in every separate case to be solved by the Council

of Peoples' Commissaries upon a preliminary discussion of the question by the E. C. and the Peoples' Commissariats interested in the said question.

VII.

The VII-th All-Russian Congress of Soviets instructs the A. R. C. E. C. to elaborate:

1. Regulations on the organisation of village Soviets and volost E. C.
2. Regulations on the functions of the presidiums of the E. C.
3. The question of organisation of labour inspection, the necessity for which the Congress of Soviets considers imperative.



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